

Lala's Playhouse and Rescue 2020 Annual Report

Introduction

As 2020 has marked our first year as a licensed nonprofit organization, we have had many successes and challenges. We've had the pleasure of caring for so many different animals and have gotten to see so many go to their forever homes. We have had a 75% adoption rate in our first year, which would not have happened without our adopters. We want to focus this next year on continuing to meet the needs of the animals in our community, without putting our finances into a deeper pit or causing more stress on our volunteers and foster homes.

2020 is just the beginning.

Our Process

Many have asked us our process, operating as a home-based or foster-based rescue. We do not have a public location where people are able to come meet the animals. This is due to the way our state and county classify "private nonprofits." This means we cannot publicly advertise business at our home. All of our animals are fostered throughout Pierce and King County. We rely on public spaces for adoption meet ups. We understand that this could hold people back from wanting to adopt from us since they are unable to meet the animals beforehand, and this is something we want to look into changing. We have been able to offer home visits with potential adopters and that has been successful.

How do we acquire animals?

We have been able to take in animals from all types of situations. Some animals we have gone out and caught, as they were dumped or abandoned outside to fend for themselves. But as many know, domestic animals do not have the same instincts or abilities compared to their wild counterparts therefore they are unable to survive in the wild. Some animals we take in are owner surrenders, where we understand that unexpected things can come up in life, where we do all we can to help find these animals loving homes. Of all years to start a rescue, we decided to start in the middle of a pandemic where the needs were high with families seeking assistance and resources for their pets. We are grateful we have been able to support these families during this time and care for their loved ones. Some animals that come in are through joint rescues with animal control or other local agencies. Some animals we come across online, being advertised for rehome but may need medical attention, care, or have been neglected, and we offer to take these animals in for their health and safety. Many animals that come into our care are from "accidental breedings" where the owner has more animals than they can care for, often unable to provide properly for the animals, or have no plans of stopping the "accidental" breedings. Regardless of how these animals enter our rescue, they are all deserving of a second chance to find their forever family.

Quarantine Period

Once we take in an animal, they are held in quarantine for at least 30 days. During these 30 days, we are able to better determine their behavior, temperament, as well as treat any medical or health concerns as needed. We do not require every animal that comes into our rescue to be seen by the vet unless we have concerns for their health. Once in our rescue, we treat them for fleas, groom them if needed, and get them updated on any vaccines as necessary. Depending on species and their health, this quarantine period can be extended.

Financial Report

To start this rescue, we have personally invested over \$5,000 to get started. The majority of this is due to our initial costs to get things set up. We had to front more money to get started by providing enough supplies and cages to start taking animals in. As we have become established, we have been able to define our limits and capacity to do the work ahead of us. We now have all of the initial supplies needed to take in animals therefore these additional expenses should not continue in 2021 unless they are in need of being replaced. In 2021, the only costs we should be expecting are items we use on a regular basis such as food, bedding, and veterinary care.

We have been able to slowly decrease this negative balance by receiving donations, both monetary and physical donations. We update our Amazon Wishlist on a consistent basis to reflect the needs of the rescue, with food and bedding being our top consistent needs. We also are able to put money donations and adoption fees towards veterinary care.

As a privately funded organization that utilizes foster homes, every dollar that has gone into our rescue, comes out of our own pockets, from our founders, board of directors, volunteers, and fosters. We hope to continue engaging our community in supporting our cause and to help us be able to continue serving the animals in need. We are so appreciative of all the support we have already received from our community.

Successes

Since becoming a nonprofit organization with our state and city, we have been able to spread more awareness of our rescue locally. We have been able to partner with other local rescues and animal control to better serve our communities, such as the Auburn Valley Humane Society, Burien CARES, Kuddles and Scales Rescue, and Munchie's Place for Homeless Pets, to name a few. We have also been utilizing the online site, Petfinder, for others to easily view our animals available for adoption. We have started to expand our connections down into Oregon with a few other small animal rescues. We also have our own website where we keep up to date the animals available for adoption, a list of all of our services, and highlights of the animals we have helped.

With the help of our community, followers, and donors, we have had 113 intakes this year, one animal become a permanent resident, and 73 adoptions in 2020. Unfortunately, we have also had five animals cross the rainbow bridge this year, as well as six get transferred to other rescues/organizations where they will be adopted out through them.

We are so grateful for all our donors who have helped provide care for the animals. We are thankful for all the wonderful families that are choosing adoption over supporting breeding mills, and have provided loving homes to the animals they've adopted from us.

Challenges

There have been many challenges, as there are with starting any business. Establishing a routine, a budget, and sticking to it. Many times, we have been overwhelmed with constantly taking in animals although we knew we were at our capacity. But we have been shown so much support during those times with donations to help keep us going. We know we cannot save every animal and we need to ensure we can manage caring for the ones in our care. But it is hard to say no to animals in need. We have to stay strong in keeping to our limit so that we do not over work ourselves or take on more than we can handle.

We have also received a few criticisms and backlash from the public with the way we run things. Some of these comments have come from individuals that were not approved to adopt from us due to having improper cage set ups. Some comments have come from those who have surrendered animals to us and who disagreed with the way we are caring for the animals. And others have come from our followers. We take other's perspectives and insights into consideration when we make decisions. But our ultimate goal will always be in the interest of the animals. We continue to work alongside veterinarians, vet techs, and other local rescues and shelters that have helped us establish our process and criteria for adopters. We are grateful when people show concern for how we are caring for animals and we aim to be straightforward in addressing these concerns.

2021 is our year to do more for the animals.

2021 Goals

One of our goals for 2021 is to build a "tiny home" at the main house. This tiny home will help us be able to efficiently house more animals as well as provide a separate space where potential adopters are able to come visit the animals we have. This will help keep our personal home from becoming overrun with animals and will create a more designated area for all our supplies. The tiny home will be insulated, powered, and have central air/heating. This tiny home is mainly to house all of our hay-eating animals such as rabbits and guinea pigs. This is to help maintain cleanliness in the main house by centralizing the hay to only the tiny home and allow for easier cage cleaning and disposing of waste as compost. This will also allow us more space in the main house to better organize the other animals in the rescue such as gerbils, mice, rats, hamsters, hedgehogs, reptiles, etc. Our goal is to raise \$2,000 for this tiny home to be up and running.

Another goal we have is to continue offering our other services at an affordable donation price. We have had the pleasure of offering grooming and nail trims for all animals such as dogs, cats, rabbits, and guinea pigs. These services can be done at one of our foster homes or curbside at your residence. We know how expensive grooming can be so we want to be able to care for your animals at a price that doesn't break the bank. We also offer small animal boarding when

space allows. It can be hard finding somewhere that boards or does small animal pet sitting and we want to be able to provide this when we can. We hope to continue building a client base. Although these services can seem small, they help us build our personal skills, spread the word about our rescue, and are another way we can receive donations.

A financial goal we have is to raise \$500 towards filling for our 501(c)3 tax exemption. This would be such a blessing to allow our donors and fosters to write off their donations as tax-deductible. Although small, this is one way we can show our gratitude to our supporters. Becoming tax exempt also opens up other doors to us, such as the ability to set up a payment plan with our veterinary office and opens us up to other opportunities.

And as always, our goal is perfectly stated in our mission.

Our mission is to advocate and provide a safe haven for animals that are abandoned, abused, or neglected. We aim to educate others on proper animal care. We operate to encourage individuals to choose adoption rather than support breeding mills.

We hope to continue doing the work we are doing. We hope to continue working with other agencies to better serve animals. We hope to continue learning and adapting to better provide for animals. We hope to continue saving these little critters' lives.

Conclusion

We have had a whirlwind of a year. We continue to go through a pandemic, we have had some financial hardships, have gone through personal battles and challenges, have had many losses, but we are set on our mission. We have had many positives as well. Our dream of saving animals has become a reality. We have opened up our hearts to so many little souls. We have learned so much about animals and their care. We have gotten to meet and work with so many amazing and passionate advocates. But there is still so much to do. And we cannot wait to continue into 2021.

Thank you for supporting us.